

FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIO-HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Bill Winders
bill.winders@gatech.edu
Office: Old CE 106
Office Phone: (404) 894-8401

HTS 7001
Tues, 3:00-6:00pm
Old CE 104
Fall 2009

Course Overview:

To answer questions, scholars and research must collect, analyze, and present data. This course will introduce an array of research methods – both historical and sociological – to students. We will begin the course by looking at the work “behind the research.” That is, how do we formulate questions? What is the social structure of social scientific inquiry? How do scholars present their research?

After formulating questions, of course, scholars must collect evidence to find answers. We will explore a wide variety of sources of data: archives, interviews, secondary data (e.g., census data), and so forth. Collecting such data is often as time-consuming as analyzing it.

In analyzing and presenting data, scholars have a number of methods from which to choose. Throughout the semester, we will explore both qualitative methods (e.g., ethnographies, oral histories, and historical and comparative methods) and quantitative methods (e.g., regression analysis). We will discuss the benefits and drawbacks of these different methods by reading and evaluating various examples of each type of research. The goal is to expose students to a number of different methodologies since different research questions often lend themselves to different methods.

Finally, we will examine the link between methods and theory. Particularly toward the end of the course, we will focus on this link by exploring how theories are often intimately linked to scholars’ choices of methods.

Requirements:

There will be several criteria for student performance in this course: class participation and several short assignments. In fulfilling these requirements, students are expected to adhere to the **Georgia Tech Honor Code** (www.deanofstudents.gatech.edu/Honor/).

Participation (30%)

Participation is essential for this class because each class session will center around discussion. So, make sure you do the reading and come prepared to discuss. To facilitate class discussion, each student should submit at least 2 questions about the readings by noon (before class) on Tuesday.

Short Assignments (70%)

Throughout the semester, you will complete seven short assignments focusing on developing a research question and using different methodologies: oral history, survey (GSS) analysis, archival research, quantitative data collection, government documents, and QCA. We will discuss these assignments as they approach. These assignments will give you “hands-on” experience with a variety of research methods. We will also read examples of scholarly use of these methods, exploring their strengths and weakness.

Readings:

All books are available at the Engineer's Bookstore at 748 Marietta Street. We will be reading each of the required books, so you should purchase or find a copy of each of these. The recommended books may be purchased at your discretion. While the recommended books are important works, we will only be reading parts of each of them.

Required Books:

Best, Joel. 2001. Damned Lies and Statistics. University of California Press.
Duneier, Mitchell. 2000. Sidewalk. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
Flamming, Douglas. 1992. Creating the Modern South. University of North Carolina Press.
Oliver, Melvin & Thomas Shapiro. 2006. Black Wealth, White Wealth (2nd Edition). Routledge.
Ragin, Charles. 1989. The Comparative Method. University of California Press.
Usselman, Steven. 2002. Regulating Railroad Innovation. Cambridge University Press.
Winders, Bill. 2009. The Politics of Food Supply. Yale University Press.

Recommended:

Becker, Howard. 1986. Writing for Social Scientists. University of Chicago.
**Kuhn, Thomas. 1962. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.
**Neuman, Lawrence. 2003. Social Research Methods. Allyn & Bacon.
Moore, Barrington, Jr. 1966. Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Beacon Press.

Weekly Schedule

Aug. 18 *Introduction: Getting Started with Research at Georgia Tech (and in Atlanta)*

Behind the Research: What Matters and Why?

Aug. 25 *Asking Research Questions*
Durkheim, Emile. 1951. Suicide. Introduction and Chapter 2.
Kuhn, Thomas. 1962. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chapters 2-4.
Geertz, Clifford. 1973. The Interpretation of Cultures. Chapter 1, ("Thick Description").
–Recommended: Neuman, Lawrence. Social Research. Chapter 1 & 4.

Sept. 1 *Methodologies, Data, and Presenting Research*

Best, Joel. 2001. Damned Lies and Statistics.
–Recommended: Neuman. Social Research. Chapters 2 ,6-8.
Assignment #1 DUE: Developing a Research Question.

- Sept. 8 *The Significance of Research: Ethics, Controversies, and Standards of Data*
 Bellesiles, Michael. 1996. "The Origins of Gun Culture in the United States, 1760-1865." *Journal of American History*. 83(2):425-455.
- Rakove, Jack. 2002. "Words, Deeds, and Guns: *Arming America* and the Second Amendment." *The William & Mary Quarterly*. 59(1):205-210.
- Main, Gloria. 2002. "Many Things Forgotten: The Use of Probate Records in *Arming America*." *The William & Mary Quarterly*. 59(1):211-216.
- Gruber, Ira. 2002. "Of Arms and Men: *Arming America* and Military History." *The William & Mary Quarterly*. 59(1):217-222.
- Roth, Randolph. 2002. "Guns, Gun Culture, and Homicide: The Relationship Between Firearms, the Uses of Firearms, and Interpersonal Violence." *The William & Mary Quarterly*. 59(1):223-240.
- Bellesiles, Michael. 2002. "Exploring America's Gun Culture." *The William & Mary Quarterly*. 59(1):241-268.

**** Between Tuesday, September 8 and Friday, September 11: Meet *individually* with Bruce Henson of Tech's Library to discuss possible primary and/or secondary sources of data for your course research****

Solving the Puzzle: How Do We Answer Our Questions?

- Sept. 15 *"The People in Your Neighborhood": Urban Ethnography and Meaning.*
 Duniere, Mitchell. 2000. Sidewalk.
 –Recommended: Neuman. Social Research. Chapters 13.
- Sept. 22 *"Giving Voice": Conducting Oral Histories.*
 Flamming, Doug. 1992. Creating the Modern South. (Especially Parts II & III.)
 –Recommended: Neuman. Social Research. Chapter 6.
- Sept. 29 *The Business of History: Exploring Patents, Business Records, etc.*
 Usselman, Steven. 2002. Regulating Railroad Innovation. (Selected Chapters)
Assignment #2 Due: Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Sources.
- Oct. 6 **No Class: Fall Break**
- Oct. 13 *A Record of the Past: Using Government Documents*
 Winders, Bill. 2009. The Politics of Food Supply.
- Oct. 20 *A Record of the Past: Using Government Archives*
Assignment #3 DUE: Oral History Interview.
Trip to the National Archives Facilities in Atlanta

- Oct. 27 *“Big Questions, Big Numbers”*: *Using Surveys to Collect Data*.
 Oliver, Melvin and Thomas Shapiro. 2006. Black Wealth, White Wealth.
 Flamming. Creating the Modern South. Appendix B.
 –Recommended: Neuman. Social Research. Chapter 12.
Assignment #4 DUE: Congressional Hearings
- Nov. 2 *Behind the Numbers: Quantitative Methods*.
 Oliver, Melvin and Thomas Shapiro. 2006. Black Wealth, White Wealth.
 –Recommended: Neuman. Social Research. Chapter 10.
 Franzosi, Roberto. 1996. “A Sociologist Meets History.” *The Journal of
 Historical Sociology*. 9(3):354-392.
Assignment #5 DUE: GSS Data Assignment.
- Nov. 9 *“Apples and Oranges”*: *Comparative Historical Methods*.
 Skocpol, Theda. 1976. “France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social
 Revolutions.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 18(2):175-210.
 Lieberman, Stanley. 1991. “Small N’s and Big Conclusions: An Examination of
 the Reasoning in Comparative Studies based on a Small Number of
 Cases.” *Social Forces*. 70(2):307-320.
 –Recommended: Neuman. Social Research. Chapter 14.
Assignment #6 DUE: Archival Research
- Nov. 16 *A More Rigorous Comparison?: The Qualitative Comparative Approach*.
 Ragin, Charles. 1989. The Comparative Method.
 Winders, Bill. “The 2004 Election in Historical Perspective: Party Cohesion and
 the Advantage of Incumbency in U.S. Presidential Elections, 1900-2004.”
 –Recommended: Neuman. Social Research. Chapter 15.
Assignment #7 DUE: Using QCA to evaluate Winders’ (2009) arguments.
- Nov. 23 **No Class: Thanksgiving Holiday**

Data, Methods, and Theory: What’s the Link?

- Dec. 1 *“Freedom Rising”*: *How do we explain the emergence of democracy?*
 Lipsett, Seymour Martin. 1994. “The Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited.”
American Sociological Review. 59(1):1-22.
 Muller, Edward. 1995. “Economic Determinants of Democracy.” *American
 Sociological Review*. 60(6):966-982.
 Moore, Barrington. 1967. Social Origins. Chapters 1, 3, and 7.
 –Recommended: Neuman. Social Research. Chapter 3.